



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

School Committee Minutes 12/20/2012

Approved by the Arlington School Committee January 24, 2013

*Arlington School Committee
Regular School Committee Meeting
Thursday, December 20, 2012
6:30 p.m.*

*Arlington High School
School Committee Room – Sixth Floor
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476*

Present: Dr. Kirsi Allison-Ampe, Chair, Mr. Judson Pierce, Vice Chair, Ms. Leba Heigham, Secretary, Mr. Jeff Thielman, Ms. Cindy Starks, Mr. William Hayner and Mr. Paul Schlichtman.

Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Dr. Laura Chesson, Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Robert Spiegel, Human Resource Officer, Ms. Siobhan Foley, AEA Vice President, Bart Bourman, Student Council President and Student Representative, and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

Absent: Ms. Kathleen Lockyer, Interim Special Education Director and AAA representative.

Siobhan Foley, and Bart Bourman exited the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Dr. Chesson exited the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

Ms. Johnson exited the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

Opening Remarks

Mr. Pierce spoke briefly on the massacre in Newtown, CT and offered a moment of silence for the tragedy on December 14, 2012.

Mr. Schlichtman moved to direct the chair to write a letter on behalf of the full committee to all federal and state elected official to request action on more stringent and strengthen gun control and improve the enhancement of mental health support and make it a top priority for the safety of our community, seconded by Mr. Pierce.

Voted: 7-0

Dr. Bodie said the Arlington Professional Community was ready and available for our students, she said each of them handled a very difficult situation with grace. Dr. Bodie said police presence was around each school on Monday following the massacre and that AYCC and others would be available to support the children of Arlington, if needed.

Dr. Allison-Ampe welcomed Ms. Siobhan Foley AEA Representative and student representative Bart Bourman, Grade 12 Student Council President to the meeting. Dr. Ampe reported out on the Art work displayed in the School Committee Room and said the work was from students at the Hardy and Thompson Schools.

Athletic Forfeitures

Dr. Bodie said she had informed parents, members of the community and the MIAA stating that Arlington High School Athletics had to forfeit several wins by some of its athletic programs during the 2011-2012 school year. These forfeitures resulted from the fact that several student athletes and foreign exchange students who competed for Arlington teams last school year were academically ineligible, or foreign exchange students who competed without required MIAA waivers under Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules.

Ms. Villano and Mr. DiLoretto provided additional details on the eligibility investigation and are committed to following procedures and protocols to prevent a recurrence of this situation. The committee members agreed that more needs to be done to insure this does not happen again and noted that student and parents should also be aware of student grades and legibility to compete under the MIAA guidelines.

Public Participation

Ms. Linda Hanson, spoke on the Arlington Education Association thoughts to School Committees FY14 Budget Priorities. (see attached)

Ms. Siobhon Foley, third grade teacher at Thompson (currently at Hardy) also the vice-president of the AEA, spoke on the budget proposal for the coming school year and offered an elementary teacher's perspective for the School Committee members. (see attached)

Mr. David Moore, Visual Art teacher at Arlington High School said he appreciates the recognition of student's artwork displayed each month in the School Committee room. Mr. Moore also commented on class size and technology resource needs and provided additional comments. (see attached)

Mr. Francis Callahan, 107 Highland Avenue, spoke about the Athletic Forfeits and in an effort to Arlington High School to establish a policy, wants it to be clear to everyone that there was never a policy in place. Mr. Callahan said that the athletic forfeit situation was a distraction from the issues around Mr. Dever.

Dr. Ampe advised Mr. Callahan to stop speaking about Mr. Dever because this was not the proper forum or the appropriate time or place to do so.

Ms. Jenn Wood, wanted to clarify that according to MIAA, the principal is responsible for eligibility of students not the athletic director and suggested that this was a smoke and mirror situation and hoped the School Committee would continue to look at the successful run of Mr. Dever.

Mr. Gus Fahey, member of class of 2008, spoke highly of Mr. Dever and wanted the committee to know the good and the importance of having Mr. Dever as the Athletic Director.

Mr. Steven Foley, member of class of 2008, spoke highly of Mr. Dever and supports having the School Committee look at problems of all administrators and having everyone check into the situation.

Mr. Matt Mezer, 86 Ridge Street, member of class of 2008 spoke highly of Mr. Dever and said that this is not a blame game and suggested that the athletic fortifiers was unfortunate but wanted it to be a joint effort of administrators, teachers, students, coaches and parents to look into student athletic grades.

Mr. Cord Tocci, 11 Scituate Street, member of class of 2008 spoke of how Mr. Dever handled and supported the student during two tragedies between 2004-2008 school year.

Mr. Nick Tate, 4 Greenland Court, member of class of 2008 spoke of the past administration, Mr. Dever and how he was a big part of his own life and Mr. Dever was someone he could always go to and talk with. He wanted the committee to know that he and the other previous students support Mr. Dever.

Mr. Chris Carmody, Stratton School parent wants the School Committee to support funding for the Stratton Library, increase the library staff, and to keep up with funding to provide new books because the PTO cannot afford to continue to do this.

Discussion of World Language Elementary Immersion Class

Ms. Catherine Ritz presented Arlington Elementary Language Proposal, dated December 2012 to the full School Committee members. The report included Pros and Cons of Magnet Immersion and District Planning, as well as an Elementary Language Proposal to roll-out the program in 2013-2014 school year and increase the program each year thereafter.

The School Committee members and Dr. Bodie appreciated the enormous amount of work and commitment of time from Ms. Ritz on the research and on her presentation. The committee would have to look at the budget, the priority and impact the Elementary

Immersion program would have to Arlington Public Schools and all their students. Mr. Thielman supports a pilot program but Dr. Ampe supports a plan not a pilot. Others want to make sure that we continue to support programs and pilots that we currently have in place before starting any other new programs due to our limited budget numbers.

School Committee Priorities on FY 14 Budget

Ms. Starks had asked each School Committee member to provide a list of priorities of what each would want and how it ties into the District Goals.

Mr. Thielman asked Ms. Johnson to provide the amount of money the schools would have to spend on district needs for 2013-2014. Ms. Johnson said about \$250,000, would be available to the schools.

The committee continued with budget discussion and made it a point to make sure that the money being spent from the budget would benefit many students, not just a few. The committee wants Dr. Bodie to keep them informed of any upcoming legal cost, Circuit Breaker numbers, and if we can reduce out of district cost. The committee would like Dr. Bodie to provide enrollment projections, class sizes, how many students are in directed studies vs. having a teacher in front of them.

Monthly Financial Report

Ms. Johnson did not have the monthly report due to her working on new budget software.

Educator Evaluation Pilot Discussion

Ms. Heigham moved to table the Educator Evaluation Pilot Discussion, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

Update on Thompson Rebuild

Dr. Bodie reported that the Thompson Rebuild is moving along as scheduled.

Superintendent Report

Dr. Bodie provided a brief update on Building Security and said the schools have been practicing lockdowns and doors at the high school, middle school and elementary schools are all locked and all persons entering the building must be buzzed in be the Main office at each school.

Subcommittee & Liaison Reports

Policies & Procedures

Mr. Pierce read the following policy for a First Reading: JLCE Nutrition and Wellness Policy and provided the committee with policy updates. Dr. Allison-Ampe said she would abstain from voting but appreciates the work of Mr. Pierce and the committee, because she does not agree with all that has been updated in the Nutrition and Wellness Policy.

***Budget**, nothing to report.*

***Community Relations**, nothing to report now but will at the next meeting.*

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment & Accountability

Mr. Thielman provided the full committee draft minutes from the Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment and Accountability Subcommittee meeting, Staff and Parent Survey results and a Summary from Payroll from 2009-2012 on the number of days staff were absent for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as requested by the full committee.

Mr. Thielman moved that the Arlington School Committee adopts a FY '14 calendar in which Thursday, September 5, 2013, Rosh Hashanah, is an observed religious holiday with no classes held that day, seconded by Mr. Hayner.

Voted: 5-2, Mr. Hayner and Ms. Starks voting No

The committee discussed the calendar, additional edits will be made to the calendar and early release days need to be added and voted on. Currently the Calendar voted is for the No School Days and for the Start date of School. Ms. Heigham suggested other community religions be surveyed as well.

Facilities, nothing to report.

Legal Services Review, nothing to report

Chair, Dr. Allison-Ampe informed the School Committee members on research for MBTA Bus passes for middle and high school students.

Ms. Starks motioned to move the 10 o'clock rule to 10:30 p.m., seconded by Mr. Hayner.

Voted: 7-0

Consent Agenda

Dr. Allison-Ampe motioned to move to approve the Consent Agenda: *Approval of Warrant # 13083 Dated, December 6, 2012, Total Warrant Amount \$653,227.92 and *Minutes for Approval: None, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

Secretary's Report

Ms. Heigham held off to report until next meeting.

Executive Session

Dr. Allison-Ampe motioned to enter into Executive Session at 10:05 p.m. to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union and/or nonunion personnel or contract negotiations with union and/or nonunion in which if held in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect.

- ***Director of Special Education***
- ***High School Principal***

And to conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, in which if held in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect, Collective bargaining may also be conducted, and to approve Memorandum of Understanding with AEA, Unit C, Clerical and to exit and return to open session, seconded by Mr. Pierce.

Roll Call: Unanimous

Voted 7-0

Adjourn

Mr. Schlichtman voted to exit out of Regular Session at 10:25 p.m., seconded by Mr. Hayner.

Voted: 7-0

*Respectfully submitted by
Karen M. Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee*

3 attachments: Linda Hanson, Siobhan Foley, and David Moore

Linda Hanson

AEA Budget Response to FY14 Budget Priorities

- Good Evening
- The Arlington Education Association appreciates the opportunity to address this body directly with a few thoughts of our own about the FY14 budget from a teacher's point of view.
- As we move further into the new era of increased accountability for meeting goals and target test score outcomes, districts need to make sure they are funneling the limited resources they have at their disposal to help teachers successfully meet the goals that school committees and administrators establish.

- Under the new Educator Evaluation System, all teachers must determine goals that align with school and district goals, which are in turn aligned to the four Standards of Effective Teaching Practice outlined in the new evaluation system.
- On October 25, you approved the broad district goals, as well as the 2012-2013 specific sub-goals. These 2012-2013 goals will, in turn, determine the focus for the goals that teachers must set for themselves for both their professional practice and student learning goals under the new system.
- It is therefore important that your budget priorities support each of the goals that you approved in this plan, because everything flows downstream from there.

I. Student Achievement

- District Goal: Improve student achievement by attaining a SGP of 51 or greater at each grade level in ELA and Math.
- In many of your remarks, you have specifically called out Middle School math performance as an area of concern.
- We therefore encourage you to pay special attention to the budget items that would support the teachers and students, and help them to improve in this area – Elementary TERC Investigations Materials for Grades 3-5, Gr. 6 CC Math Curriculum materials, one or two Elementary math specialists, and an additional OMS math support teacher.

II. Professional Development

- District Goal: Provide every teacher and specialist with at least one professional development experience designed to deepen their knowledge of content and differentiation strategies.
- Professional development requires funding for time resources, expert presenters, and workshop conference fees.
- While we offer many great professional development opportunities in-house, teachers and therapists can also learn much through exposure to state and national conferences sponsored by their own professional organizations. This costs money.
- District Goal: Provide professional development for teachers and administrators on iPad technology and instructional integration of technology to improve teaching and learning.
- Teachers are very excited to be scratching the surface of the technology revolution – with a much appreciated increase in the number of computer projectors, Elmo projectors, and iPads across the district.
- We have started to fill in the huge technology gap that existed in the district, and more evenly distribute technology tools across the district, but we still have a ways to go.
- In addition to the technology, teachers also need access to IT support to understand how to best use the technology, and to have access to the back-up supports necessary to make sure all of the parts are working correctly.
- Quote from an Ottoson teacher: “We need a full time IT person at the Middle School to maintain the computers and wifi systems. We cannot be expected to integrate technology if there is no one on-call to reset passwords for kids who forget, fix broken machines, update software, and perform overall maintenance.”
- This teacher goes on to describe the frustration of trying to integrate technology without the appropriate IT support.
- We all know how hard the existing IT people work. I think the point here is that the current level of support teachers have access to in real time, as the lesson unfolds, or the weekly plans are made, is inadequate to meet the surge in demand for the current IT staff time available.
- District goal: Support the implementation of the new Educator Evaluation System. We agree with the need to increase administrative support at the Middle School and High School with an additional .5 FTE Assistant Principal at each school to support increased enrollment and the demands of the new EES.

III. Resources, Infrastructure and Educational Environment

- District Goal: Develop a needs statement and potential actions that address planning for the future of APS, with an emphasis

on the AHS, OMS, Stratton and Preschool.

- I would like to particularly address the needs of the Preschool tonight.
 - Dr. Bodie, Kathleen Lockyear, Bill Hayner and I took a tour of the Preschool classrooms and offices on Tuesday this week. The goal was to better understand the more immediate needs for teaching and learning in that space, prior to the more detailed facilities review that will be carried out soon.
 - There are some immediate needs in this program, things large and small, that could really make a difference in the quality of the educational environment.
 - We strongly recommend that some money be set aside to better meet the needs of the 26 staff members, who are clearly very dedicated and creative individuals, trying hard to make the best of subpar conditions.
 - I have compiled a list that can be used as a starting point for this conversation as a result of our visit the other day, that I would be happy to share with you.
 - Though housed in the High School, the program stands alone, and has needs that are very specific to the clientele it serves.
 - Some items on the list are as simple as getting a few more laptops down there so that 5 staff members don't have to share one school-furnished computer.
 - Another request is to reconfigure the space so that therapy sessions and parent meetings can take place in more private spaces without frequent interruptions. This may require some additional furniture and moveable wall barriers.
 - We need to support this program so that it can grow and thrive and provide the best possible level of service to the children it serves.
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- I will now turn the microphone over to Siobhan Foley, who will speak to a few of the other teacher priorities.
 - My name is Siobhan Foley and I am a third grade teacher at Thompson (currently at Hardy) and I am also the vice-president of the AEA. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.
 - I would like to address the budget proposal for the coming school year and offer an elementary teacher's perspective for your consideration.
 - I am very glad to see that grades 3 through 5 will be getting the materials that they need to teach the new TERC curriculum. This is very much needed in order to do the program justice. As a former math teacher, Doctor Bodie can probably verify that no math curriculum is perfect and teachers often discover that they need to supplement or even replace lessons in order to better teach their students. I understand that the publishing company offers a license that can be purchased to download the workbooks and print out the sheets that are needed. I also understand that this is a very expensive purchase. For the next few years, the workbooks will be a necessary part of our teaching materials, however I would urge the superintendent and the committee to consult with grades 3-5 teachers to find out what is being used and to revisit the idea that maybe purchasing the license would be a better option.
 - I am a part of the committee that is learning about the new evaluation system and then leading workshops in the schools to educate our colleagues. So far, I think the meetings are going very well. There is a lot of open discussion and we are moving forward. The paperwork of the new evaluation system could be a challenge for teachers and administrators alike. I wholeheartedly approve of the proposal to purchase software that could make this easier.
 - I am also very glad to see a proposal to increase the pay of substitute teachers. This has been a long time in coming. I would like to see the pay increased to at least 80\$ per day. The pool of substitute teachers has dwindled because of the low pay. Classroom teachers are given priority for any available subs. There are many times when there are not enough subs to cover the classes of specialist teachers such as music, art or Physical education. When these classes are not covered, classroom teachers do not get their prep time. The administration has been allowing us to accrue this prep time as comp time to take off a half day or even a full day. The problem is that on the day that we lost the prep time we lost the time to make copies, answer e-mails, correct work, prepare for the lessons in the latter part of the day, check-in with a colleague or the principal, document the work or behavior of a student who concerns us and just get a chance to go to the bathroom. Prep time is a contractually mandated part of our day and it needs to be honored. Collecting comp time does not make up for the missed prep times, and frankly it's more trouble than it's worth to collect the times, put in the paperwork and prepare for a sub in order to take the time. A large pool of substitute teachers would keep us to the contract.
 - The lunch monitors in the elementary schools have an intense few hours in their day. They have a revolving mass of children who

have escaped the rigors and structure of their classrooms to join with their friends from other classes to play and (hopefully) eat lunch. The monitors stay outside for several recesses even in the freezing weather. They clean between the lunches as fast as they can. They help children get to their tables without spilling and deal with the problems big and small that happen when children are given this time for socializing. This is done efficiently and well with each wave of excited, energetic, and consequently clumsy groups of children. They should not be paid minimum wage.

- In this same vein, we have wonderful teaching assistants . . . wonderful teaching assistants . . .who do much more than their job descriptions. Teachers at all levels have asked that the district raise their salaries to a level that is comparable to other districts.
- A question has come up about the Lucy Calkins materials starred in the budget. With the exception of new classrooms, teachers have the books that are a part of this curriculum. Principals and PTO's have purchased the literature that accompanies the program. We would like the committee to investigate the materials that are being requested and to truly ascertain the necessity of purchasing them.
- Teachers at all levels are also concerned about class size. This is a problem that needs attention sooner rather than later.
- Thank you for letting me speak tonight.

Dear School Committee Members Kathy Bodie, Laura Chesson, and Guests

Thank you for giving me a few moments to speak with you tonight. I will be very concise and brief. It's good to see everyone is hooked up electronically. I am David Moore, a Visual Art teacher at Arlington High School with 13 years teaching experience in this district and a total of 30 years teaching all grades, from Kindergarten through Graduate School.

The Visual Arts Department very much appreciates your recognition of student's artwork each month.

I am glad that you recognize that class size is a concern and I would strongly recommend that you increase the budget for more teachers at all levels. At Arlington High School we are truly maxed out. While teaching to all students as a priority continues, advanced students and lower performing student will fall through the gap. Teachers can no longer do the work for .2 department chairs and shorthanded administrators without sacrificing their preparation time and class time. Unless teacher and administrative staff is increased, we cannot meet the district goal with confidence. In the end we are not serving the needs of all students.

We need to continue to overhaul the technology resources at Arlington High School. Our students are part of a technological revolution racing past us and we need to catch up. Graduates need to be proficient in both Apple and PC platforms to meet the challenges at college and in student career building. We appreciate the new wireless system at AHS but honestly it needs greater speed - is slower than most of the student's iPhones, even at outdated g3 speeds. Sometimes it takes me ten minutes to get online to take care of grades and attendance, something Power school was supposed to improve.

Unfortunately our current technology~is outdated. Some examples are:

- In Digital Photography courses we use Photoshop 6 is which is now over 12 yrs old. (Release date: 2000)
- Down loading digital film media now takes about 20 minutes for~a 2 minute edited work ~ ~rendered~on simple Moviemaker.
- While many in our district are now hooked up to iPads, we have no Apple computer stations that can easily cross platform with the district and with ACMI.
- We should have Adobe Master Collection 6, now available with automatic updates using a monthly service fee.

We have no concrete plans for a Digital Imaging Film and Animation Studio.

We have built a Music Lab and updated it this year with new equipment and programs. We have a quality CAD program with updated software and new hardware. The massive files for digital media in film and photography require fast throughput connections and modern storage. For all of our students who will one day create their own web site, the very basics in visual rendering have been severely underserved..

Arlington is now a destination for significant Public Art. We have the Arlington International Film Festival, A new public art mural at Boys and Girls Club which some of you celebrated its unveiling last Sunday. We have a new Pilot AEF grant~in Digital Film and Animation, and the Art club meets twice a month at ACMI

Every student has a story to tell. Most artists use Apple computers.

We need a Digital Media Technology Studio in a dedicated space at AHS for 20 Apple stations, plus the support staff and long-term strategies to meet the needs of the Visual Art Department and the studio's availability to all departments.

Thank you for your time